The Cleveland Museum of Art

Derek Krueger, Distinguished Byzantine Expert, Investigates the "Religion of Relics"

News Release
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Annual Dr. John and Helen Collis Lecture at the Cleveland Museum of Art offers insight for the museum's Treasures of Heaven exhibition

CLEVELAND (Sept. 9, 2010) – Dr. Derek Krueger, the Joe Rosenthal Excellence Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, will explore the religion of relics in early Byzantium during the annual Dr. John and Helen Collis Lecture at 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 26, in the Cleveland Museum of Art's Gartner Auditorium. The free lecture provides a thought-provoking preview for the museum's major fall exhibition *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe,* which opens on Oct. 17.

Drawing on the subject for his exhibition catalogue entry in the Collis lecture, Krueger will discuss the practices and beliefs associated with holy people, places and things from the beginning of Christianity to the establishment of the Byzantine Empire. The physical remains of holy men and women and other objects associated with them played a central role in a number of religions and cultures and were especially important to the development of Christianity. Relics were treated with special reverence and were expected to provide those who possessed them with help with practical and spiritual problems.

To convey the sanctity of relics to the faithful, medieval artists created precious containers, or reliquaries, for churches, shrines and personal use. Often covered in gold and silver or encrusted with precious and semi-precious stones, these objects commanded attention. Their outward appearance reminded worshippers of the extraordinary nature of the matter they contained and were powerful in inspiring religious devotion among believers.

Although there is no fee to attend the Collis lecture, tickets are required. Tickets are available now through the museum's box office at 216-421-7350 or 888-CMA-0033. More information is available online at www.ClevelandArt.org [1].

About Dr. Derek Krueger
Derek Krueger has been a faculty member at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro since 1991 and recently became the Joe Rosenthal Excellence Professor of Religious Studies. He has

taught coursework ranging from the practice of Christianity in Byzantium to the role of gender and culture in religion.

Krueger is an historian of Christian culture in Late Antiquity and Byzantium and served on the advisory committee for the *Treasures of Heaven* exhibition.

Krueger is an accomplished author, having written on a variety of subjects in Late Antiquity and Byzantine cultural and religious history, including hagiography, monasticism, everyday religion of lay Christians and the reception of the Bible. Krueger authored two books on early Byzantine Christianity: *Symeon the Holy Fool: Leonitiuss Life and the Late Antique City* and *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East.* He also is the editor of *Byzantine Christianity,* the third volume in the series *A People's History of Christianity.* He is concurrently working on two books that explore the culture of monasticism in Byzantium and the formation of ideas about the Christian self in Byzantine liturgical celebration.

Krueger's research has been funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies in Washington, D.C. He graduated in 1991 with his doctorate degree from Princeton University.

About the Dr. John and Helen Collis Lecture

The annual Dr. John and Helen Collis Lecture brings nationally and internationally recognized experts in the field of art history and archeology to discuss new scholarship, museum exhibitions and archaeological discoveries. Topics alternate between Ancient Greek and Byzantine art.

The lecture is made possible through the Dr. John and Helen Collis Family Endowment. The endowment is the first of its kind at the museum, as it presents an annual lecture dedicated to a particular art historical emphasis. Additional support for this lecture comes from The Hellenic Preservation Society (HPS) of Northeastern Ohio, a nonprofit organization whose focus is to preserve the Hellenic legacy that will promote the Greek experience through education, collection and preservation. Dr. John and Helen Collis are both members of the society.

About The Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 40,000 objects and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. Currently undergoing a multi-phase renovation and expansion project, it is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship, performing arts and art education. Admission to the museum is free.

The Cleveland Museum of Art has a membership of more than 21,500 households and is supported by a broad range of individuals, foundations and businesses in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. The museum is generously funded by Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture.

Additional support comes from the Ohio Arts Council, which helps fund the museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. For more information about the museum, its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org [1].

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org [2].

Press Announcements [3]

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